

Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan Changes for Lobster and Jonah Crab Fisheries

The following changes have been made to the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan (Plan) as of August 2021.
All Plan requirements not listed here remain in place and should continue to be adhered to.

CHANGES TO LOBSTER AND JONAH CRAB TRAP/POT CLOSURE AREAS

EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 18, 2021

All new and existing closures are modified from restricting all trap/pot fishing to only restricting trap/pot fishing that uses persistent (traditional) buoy lines, except for federal waters in the Outer Cape Lobster Management Area (LMA), which remains closed consistent with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) American lobster Interstate Fishery Management Plan. Gear that does not use persistent buoy lines, such as “ropeless” gear that retrieves trap/pot trawls when the vessel is on-site, is now allowed in these areas for research purposes with appropriate state and federal permits (see below).

EXEMPTED FISHING PERMITS

Exempted Fishing Permits (EFPs) are issued for activities in support of fisheries-related research. There are studies underway to develop fishing methods that do not use buoy lines to retrieve gear and alert other fishermen to the presence of gear on the bottom. Results of this work would enable the fishing industry to operate in areas where persistent buoy lines are prohibited. To participate in this research, federally permitted vessels must operate under EFPs.

If you are interested in testing ropeless gear or have another idea for research related to reducing the use of persistent buoy lines, please contact your NOAA Fisheries regional office. You may also need to obtain authorization from the state that issues your fishing permit.

NEW RESTRICTED AREAS

LMA1 Restricted Area, Offshore Maine LMA1 zones C/D/E:

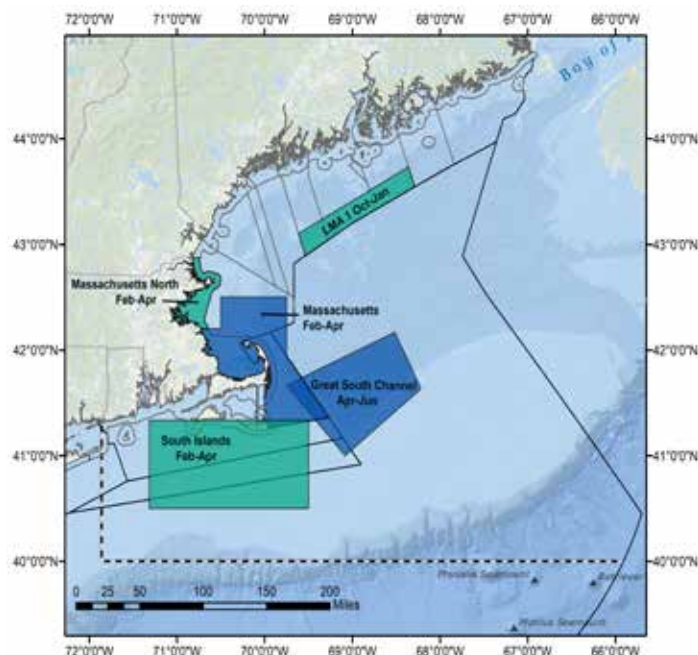
Closed to buoy lines October-January

Longitude	Latitude
-69° 36.77' W	43° 06.00' N
-68° 21.60' W	43° 44.00' N
-68° 17.27' W	43° 32.68' N
-69° 32.16' W	42° 53.52' N
-69° 36.77' W	43° 06.00' N

South Island Restricted Area:

Closed to buoy lines February-April

Longitude	Latitude
-71° 19.00' W	41° 20.00' N
-69° 30.00' W	41° 20.00' N
-69° 30.00' W	40° 30.00' N
-71° 19.00' W	40° 30.00' N



For EFP Questions contact:

- Greater Atlantic Region (Maine to Virginia): (978) 281-9315 or nmfs.gar.researchpermit@noaa.gov.
- Southeast Region (North Carolina to Florida): (727) 824-5305

Massachusetts Restricted Area North:

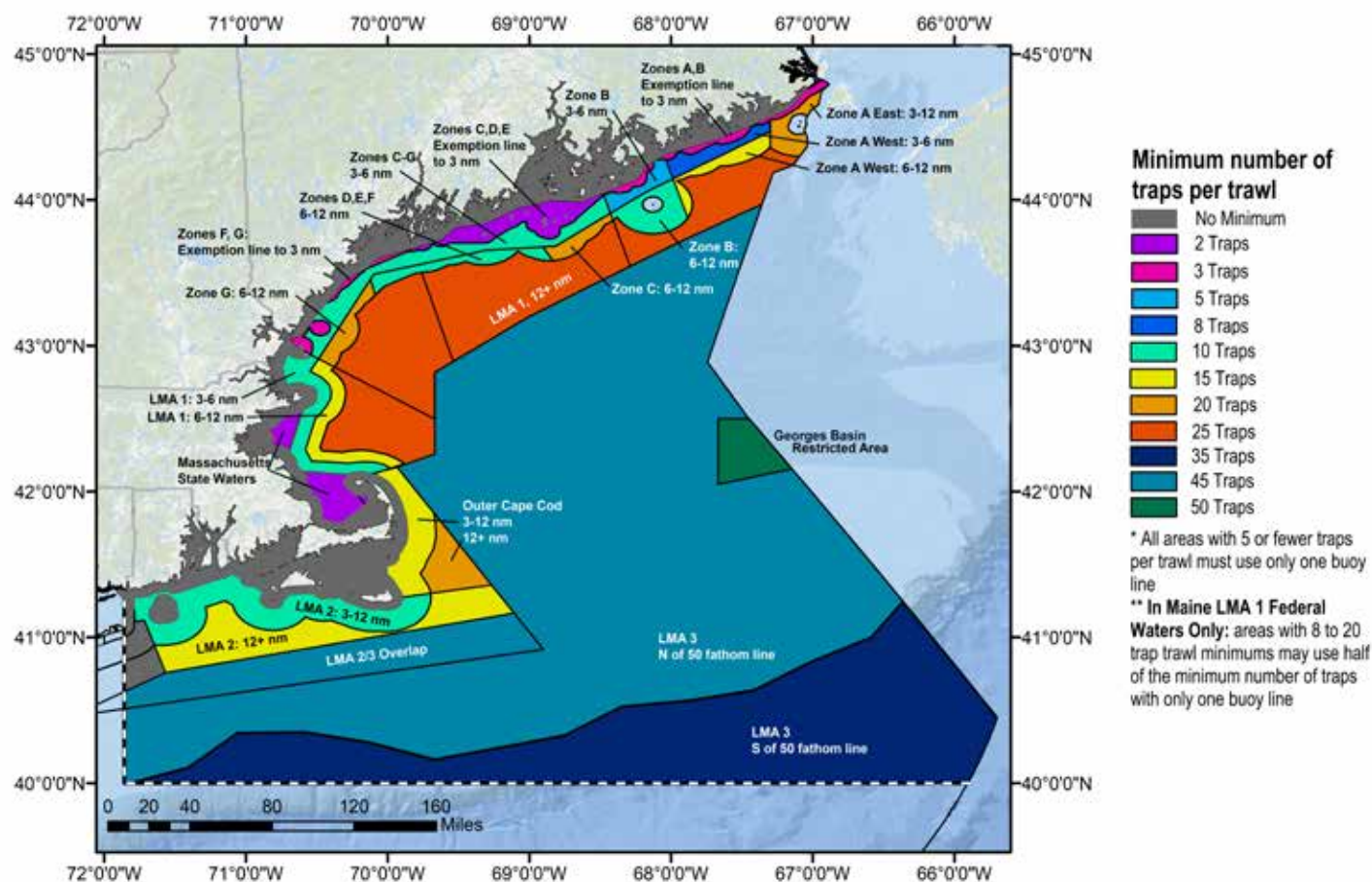
This area expands the previous Massachusetts Restricted Area (MRA). The entire area is closed to buoy lines February-April.

Longitude	Latitude
-70° 48.98' W	42° 52.32' N
-70° 43.94' W	42° 52.58' N
-70° 38.69' W	42° 12.00' N
-70° 30.00' W	42° 12.00' N
-70° 30.00' W	42° 30.00' N
-69° 45.00' W	42° 30.00' N
-69° 45.00' W	41° 56.50' N
-69° 16.00' W	41° 21.50' N
-69° 57.90' W	41° 15.30' N
-70° 00.00' W	41° 20.30' N
-70° 00.00' W	41° 40.2' N

Massachusetts state regulations extend the MRA closure in state waters to May 15, with potential extension until May 31, if whales remain in the area. More information can be found at www.mass.gov/orgs/division-of-marine-fisheries.

CHANGES TO LOBSTER AND JONAH CRAB MINIMUM TRAP PER TRAWL REQUIREMENTS

EFFECTIVE MAY 1, 2022



The tables below only show the management areas where there are new minimum traps per trawl requirements. Requirements for all other areas remain the same. Visit fisheries.noaa.gov/alwtrp for complete regulations.

MINIMUM NUMBER OF TRAPS PER BUOY LINE IN MAINE MANAGEMENT ZONES

MAINE ZONE	TRAP/TRAWL REQUIREMENTS WITH TWO BUOY LINES	TRAP/TRAWL REQUIREMENTS WITH ONE BUOY LINE
ME exempt area—3 nm, Zones A, B, F, G	N/A	3
ME exempt area—3 nm, Zones C, D, E	4	2 (status quo)
ME 3–6 nm*, Zone A West	8	4
ME 3–6 nm*, Zone B	N/A	5
ME 3–6 nm*, Zones C, D, E, F, G	10	5
ME 3–12 nm, Zone A East	20	10
ME 6*–12 nm, Zone A West	15	8
ME 6*–12 nm, Zone B, D, E, F	10 (status quo)	5
ME 6*–12 nm, Zone C, G	20	10
*Note that the 6 nm line refers to an approximation, described in 50 CFR 229.32 (a)(2)(ii).		

MINIMUM TRAPS PER TRAWL IN LOBSTER MANAGEMENT AREAS

LOBSTER MANAGEMENT AREAS (LMA)	MINIMUM TRAPS/ TRAWL
LMA 1, excluding Maine Zones	
MA LMA 1, 6*–12 nm	15
LMA 1 beyond 12 nm	25
Outer Cape Cod	
3- 12 nm	15
LMA 3	
<i>In all LMA3 areas below, maximum trawl length is also increased from 1.5 to 1.75 nautical miles.</i>	
North of 50 fathom line on the south end of Georges Bank	45
South of 50 fathom line on the south end of Georges Bank	35
Georges Basin Restricted Area	50

CHANGES TO LOBSTER AND JONAH CRAB TRAP/POT WEAK INSERTS

EFFECTIVE MAY 1, 2022

The 2021 rule removes the requirement for weak link at buoys* and other surface system flotation devices, and adds requirements for weak rope or insertions within the buoy line.

The following table represents the lobster and Jonah crab trap/pot management areas where changes have been made to weak inserts. Requirements for all other areas, other trap/pot fisheries, and gillnet fisheries remain the same.

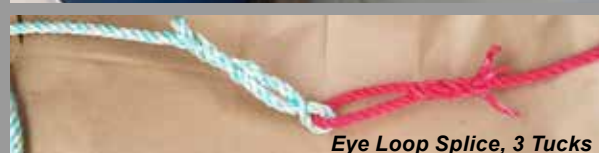
Visit fisheries.noaa.gov/alwtrp for complete regulations.

*Weak links at the buoy may still be used voluntarily.

AREA	WEAK INSERTION REQUIREMENTS
ME Exempt State Waters	1 weak insert 50% down the line OR top 50% of buoy line weak rope.
ME Exempt Line—3 nm	
NH State Waters	
MA State Waters	Weak inserts every 60 feet OR full weak line in the top 75% of line.
RI State Waters	
LMA 2	
ME Zone A West, B, C, D, E; federal waters 3–12 nm	2 weak inserts at 25% and 50% down the line OR top 50% of buoy line weak rope.
MA and NH LMA 1, OCC; federal waters 3–12 nm	
ME Zone A East, F, and G; federal waters 3–12 nm	1 weak insert 33% down the line.
LMA 1 & OCC beyond 12 nm	
LMA 3	Top 75% of one buoy line is full weak line. Bottom 25% can be higher strength.

EXAMPLES OF WEAK INSERT RIGGING METHODS

USED WITH WEAK ROPE

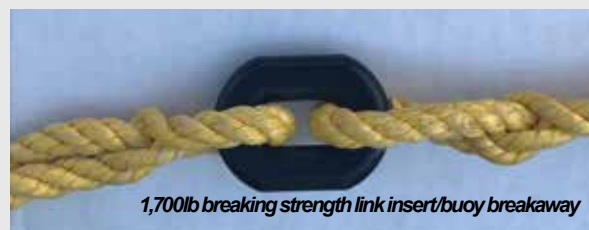


The red rope in these pictures is weak rope manufactured by Rocky Mount Cord Company. Rocky Mount Candycane is also approved for use.

NO WEAK ROPE USED



This red sleeve is manufactured by Novabraid.



Check fisheries.noaa.gov/alwtrp for more approved weak insert rigging methods.

CHANGES TO GEAR MARKING REQUIREMENTS

EFFECTIVE DATE

The tables below show the new gear marking requirements for lobster and Jonah crab trap/pot gear in the Northeast. Requirements for all other management areas and other fisheries remain the same. These requirements represent the minimum markings. Additional markings are also allowed. Visit fisheries.noaa.gov/alwtrp for complete regulations.

FEDERAL WATERS

NEW REQUIREMENTS FOR FEDERAL WATERS
AREA COLOR IS BASED ON PERMIT'S PRINCIPAL PORT (NON-LMA 3) OR LMA 3 PERMIT.
<p>Maine</p> <p>One 3-foot PURPLE color mark within 2 fathoms of buoy; and One 12-inch PURPLE mark at the top of the buoy line below the surface system; and One 12-inch PURPLE mark in the middle of buoy line; and One 12-inch PURPLE mark in the bottom of buoy line; and Four 12-inch GREEN marks, each within 6 inches of a PURPLE mark.</p>
<p>New Hampshire</p> <p>One 3-foot YELLOW color mark within 2 fathoms of buoy; and One 12-inch YELLOW mark at the top of the buoy line below the surface system; and One 12-inch YELLOW mark in the middle of buoy line; and One 12-inch YELLOW mark at the bottom of the buoy line; Four 12-inch GREEN marks, each within 6 inches of a YELLOW mark.</p>
<p>Massachusetts</p> <p>One 3-foot RED color mark within 2 fathoms of buoy with one 12-inch GREEN mark no more than 1 foot below the RED mark; One 2-foot long mark consisting of one 12-inch RED mark and one 12-inch GREEN mark at the top of the buoy line below the surface system; and One 2-foot long mark consisting of one 12-inch RED mark and one 12-inch GREEN mark in the middle of buoy line; and One 2-foot long mark consisting of one 12-inch RED mark and one 12-inch GREEN mark at the bottom of the buoy line; * If you have line marked at every 60 feet as required by the state, there must be GREEN mark next to all RED state marks. **If the buoy line is red or red/white striped (candycane), WHITE marks can be substituted for RED marks above.</p>
<p>Rhode Island</p> <p>One 3-foot SILVER/GRAY color mark within 2 fathoms of buoy; and One 12-inch SILVER/GRAY mark at the top of the buoy line below the surface system; and One 12-inch SILVER/GRAY mark in the middle of buoy line; and One 12-inch SILVER/GRAY mark at the bottom of the buoy line; and Four 12-inch GREEN marks, each within 6 inches of a SILVER/GRAY mark.</p>
<p>LMA 3</p> <p>One 3-foot long BLACK mark within 2 fathoms of the buoy line; and One 12-inch BLACK mark at the top of the buoy line below the surface system; and One 12-inch BLACK mark in the middle of buoy line; and One 12-inch BLACK mark at the bottom of the buoy line; and Four 12-inch GREEN marks, each within 6-inches of a BLACK mark.</p>

STATE WATERS

NEW REQUIREMENTS FOR STATE WATERS
<p>Maine</p> <p>One 3-foot PURPLE mark within 2 fathoms (of the buoy; and One 12-inch PURPLE mark in top 50% of buoy line; and One 12-inch PURPLE mark in bottom 50% of buoy line. Maine Exempt Waters have different state requirements that are not included here.</p>
<p>New Hampshire</p> <p>One 3-foot YELLOW mark within 2 fathoms of buoy; and One 12-inch YELLOW mark in top 50% of buoy line; and One 12-inch YELLOW mark in bottom 50% of buoy line.</p>
<p>Massachusetts</p> <p>One solid 3-foot RED mark in top 12 feet of rope; and Two 2-foot RED marks in the top 50% of the buoy line; and Two 2-foot RED marks in the bottom 50% of the buoy line. Additional marks may be necessary. No length of buoy line greater than 60 feet without a state RED mark is allowed. *If the buoy line is red or red/white (candycane), WHITE marks may be substituted for RED marks.</p>
<p>Rhode Island</p> <p>One 3-foot SILVER/GRAY mark within 2 fathoms of buoy; and One 12-inch SILVER/GRAY mark in top 50% of buoy line; and One 12-inch SILVER/GRAY mark in bottom 50% of buoy line.</p>

CONTACTS

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